

Eternal Vigilance.

There are some people who appear indifferent to the encroachments upon liberty, if the encroachments appear at the time to be small. There are some who fail to see in the Porto Rican tariff duty, in the government of Porto Rico by executive power, and in the denial to the Filipinos of the right of self-government, any evil serious enough to warrant consideration.

Daniel Webster, in a speech delivered in the senate May 7, 1834, had something to say on this subject. This is what Webster said: "Every encroachment, great or small, is important enough to awaken the attention of those who are entrusted with the preservation of a constitutional government. We are not to wait till great public mischiefs come, till the government is overthrown, or liberty itself put into extreme jeopardy. We should not be worthy sons of our fathers were we so to regard great questions affecting the general freedom. Those fathers accomplished the revolution on a strict question of principle. The Parliament of Great Britain asserted a right to tax the colonies in all cases whatsoever; and it was precisely on this question that they made the revolution turn. The amount of taxation was trifling, but the claim itself was inconsistent with liberty; and that was in their eyes enough. It was against the recital of an act of Parliament, rather than against any suffering under its enactments, that they took up arms. They went to war against a preamble. They fought seven years against a declaration. They poured out their treasures and their blood like water, in a contest against an assertion which those less sagacious and not so well schooled in the principles of civil liberty would have regarded as barren phraseology, or mere parade of words. They saw in the claim of the British Parliament a seminal principle of mischief, the germ of unjust power; they detected it, dragged it forth from underneath its plausible disguise, struck at it; nor did it elude either their steady eye or well directed blow till they had extirpated and destroyed it, to the smallest fibre. On this question of principle; while actual suffering was yet far off, they raised their flag against a power, to which for purposes of foreign conquest and subjugation, Rome, in the height of her glory, is not to be compared; a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts; whose morning drum-beat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

The Cost of War.

In an address before the Arbitration Conference at Lake Mohonk, New York, Professor Clark of Columbia combatted the idea that war promoted prosperity. He said that war simply gave the present money to expand by mortgaging the future, and he asserted that war was a source of poverty rather than of wealth. It is strange that any one would take issue with such a statement, and yet there are

many people who imagine that war produces prosperity. Day by day we see our war expenses piling up into the millions. Everyone knows that money doesn't grow on trees, and yet there are many who do not stop to think that somebody is paying these enormous war expenses. Is Mr. Hanna paying this money out of his own pocket? By no means. The money comes from the public treasury and the people are bearing the burden and will yet feel the burden.

The Pilgrim, a magazine edited by Willis J. Abbott, has an interesting article on this subject. It says:

"The people of Washington with a taste for statistics say that we have spent in the Philippines already something in the neighborhood of \$300,000,000. They further inform us that the appropriations of the last congress for expenditures growing out of war exceeded \$481,000,000. These are big figures; hard for the average man to comprehend, though he pays his share of them none the less. It is true that the way in which the national taxes are collected disguise the moment and method of payment so that one scarcely knows that he has paid at all. But be sure that if \$485,000,000 are needed for military expenses, and the number of families in the United States is 15,000,000, the head of each family will have to pay about \$40 for his part in the national glory. But it is rather in consideration of the things we might have had for our money that the wastefulness of war finds emphasis. Think of the arid lands that might have been watered, the ship canals that might have been digged. We might even attain those socialistic ideals, an endowed theatre and an endowed newspaper with a trivial part of it. If employment is needed for our sons, that sum capitalized and invested in productive enterprise would furnish jobs for all the unemployed, and they would be taught useful callings, instead of how to deliver a murderous thrust, or the killing range of a rifle bullet. As for glory, why should the general who lays waste a province enjoy a greater share of human regard than the farmer on a great scale who can make a desert blossom and feed a nation?"

"Our Terms."

On his arrival at San Francisco, General Bates, the father of the Sulu treaty, speaking of the Sulu Islands, said:

"I found the people to be very much like our native Indians, and it seemed to me that it would be better to get them in an amicable mood than to go in for an Indian war. General Otis put \$10,000 in silver at my disposal, and after they had given all the concessions that the government wished I made a few presents, but they did not get a cent until they had come to our terms."

It will be remembered that when the Filipinos assured General Otis that the first shot in the Filipino war was a mistake, and pleaded for a cessation of hostilities, General Otis replied that the fighting having begun "must now go on to the grim end." It will also be remembered that while earnest efforts were made to pacify and to place in "an amicable mood" the heathen chief of the Sulu Islands, no effort was made to place in "an amicable mood" the christian people of the Philippine Islands.

Would it not also have been better to have placed the Filipinos in "an amicable mood" rather than to "go in" for a Philippine war in which this nation was placed in the attitude of opposing men who were struggling for independence?

General Bates says, referring to the Sulu people,—“They did not get a cent until they had come to our terms.” This is an interesting admission.

Under that treaty the heathen Sulu sultan was given certain sovereign powers in a territory over which the sovereignty of the United States had been asserted. Was that a part of “our terms.”

In that treaty it was agreed that the religious customs, among which polygamy was conspicuous, would not be interfered with, and that was a part of “our terms.”

Under that treaty it was provided that whenever a slave, who worked for nothing a day, had accumulated a sufficient sum from the proceeds of his toil, he should have the privilege of purchasing his freedom “by paying to the master the usual market value;” and that was a part of “our terms?”

It is good to be told by General Bates that the officers of the United States army, sent as the special representatives of this great republic to negotiate with a heathen sultan, stood firm as rocks and would not deliver a penny of the filthy lucre until the old heathen came to “our terms.”

We may well imagine the sultan of Sulu insisting that he and his people should have the privilege of retaining human beings in slavery; and we can imagine on the other hand General Bates, proud representative of a proud people, insisting that the Sultan must agree that whenever a slave on American territory could obtain enough money with which to purchase his freedom he was to be entitled to that privilege.

It was a splendid stand that General Bates made! There should be no monopoly on the privilege of purchasing human flesh beneath the folds of the American flag! If a speculator has the right to go into the market and buy human bodies at the rate of \$20 per body, the slave himself, should in conscience, be given the same privilege!

To be sure this is not a constitutional privilege because long ago slavery was taken out of the American constitution. But in recent days the constitution has lost its force and seems no longer to be available as a guide. Yet as a general principle it would seem to be right that under the sovereignty of a nation that was long ago dedicated to freedom, and that has been baptized and re-baptized in “liberty’s unclouded blaze,” human beings held in bondage should at least be given the right to purchase their freedom!

And this beneficent privilege, this fine tribute to liberty is due to the firm stand made by General Bates who did not “pay over one cent” to the sultan until he had complied with “our terms!”

The Sulu Treaty.

At the request of a reader of THE COMMONER the Sulu treaty is given below. It is now about two years since the treaty was signed, but our flag is still flying over the Sultan’s palace and both slavery and polygamy remain undisturbed. The treaty reads:

Article I. The sovereignty of the United States